

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

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COUNTRY East Germany

REPORT

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TOPIC Winter Exercise of the 12th Gds Tank Div and Activities at the

Gentzrode Post Training Grounds

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EVALUATION PLACE OBTAINED

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DATE OF CONTENT

25X1

DATE OBTAINED

DATE PREPARED 19 April 1955

REFERENCES

This is UNEVALUATED Information

PAGES 2 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

REMARKS

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1. At 0900 on 19 March 1955, the units stationed in the Friedrich-Franz-Kaserne (2201) in Neuruppin were apparently alerted. Approximately 28 trucks towing 17 x 37-mm AA guns assembled in the barracks yard and left the installation at about 0930. They were followed by 6 armored personnel carriers and 3 ambulances. Approximately 40 trucks occupied by soldiers and towing about 24 x 122-mm field howitzers came from the direction of Scholteplatz and were followed by some 30 tanks of a new type which resembled that of a T-34 tank and a turret which resembled a T-34. The gun had no muzzle brake and a caliber of about 100 mm.

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2. On 19 March, units in the approximate strength of a division arrived from the direction of Rheinsberg and assembled in the Zechlin-Flecken-Linow-Rheinsberg-Schwanow-Frankendorf area. During the movement, all highways and roads were blocked by barriers which were guarded by sentries, so that only dirt roads and wood lanes could be used.

The assembled units were equipped with armored personnel carriers, armored scout cars, trucks and several tanks. The soldiers wore white badges on their caps. Almost all of them carried new rifles with new sharp bayonets, 2 cm wide. It was noted that the submachine guns were equipped exclusively with box magazines instead of drum magazines.

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3. On 20 March, it was determined that a control headquarters was located southwest of Linow. A number of telephone connections were observed there. After 1700 on 21 March, the units took position. In the following night, Wallitz, Zeuhlen and Bienwalde were attacked by infantry with armored support. At about 1730 on 23 March, the troops advanced northwestward. The exercise apparently terminated in the morning of 24 March. A Soviet colonel referred to the exercise as "shifting maneuver" (Verschiebe Manoever). The driver's cabs of many trucks of the units involved mounted devices which consisted of 4 tubes, about 15 cm long and 4 cm in diameter, and were fitted on a tripod. Officers were repeatedly seen looking through the instruments.

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4. Between 24 and 26 March, new tanks fired at the Gentzrode post firing range. One shot was fired about every 30 minutes. A group of vehicles and officers with measuring instruments changed its position after every shot.

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5. During the nights of 22/23 and 23/24 March, noises of trucks and track-laying vehicles were heard in Neu-Roofen from the direction of the Menz-Fuerstenberg road. columns of trucks, half-truck vehicles with guns and tanks which came from the direction of Rheinsberg continually passed through Menz and proceeded toward Fuerstenberg during the night of 23/24 March. The columns allegedly involved elements which returned from firing practices in the Neuruppin area.

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1. Comment. According to previous reports, the 12th Gds Tank Div conducted winter exercises in the eastern portion of the Wittstock training grounds and eastward between 19 and 22 March. The present report confirms and supplements these observations. the exercise was conducted particularly to train the command personnel. paragraph 1 tend to indicate that a large number of tanks of the new type (T-54s?) participated. The units, which proceeded on the Menz-Fuerstenberg road, may have been elements of the 34th Gds Mtz Rifle Regt and army troops of the Second Gds Mecz Army which returned to Fuerstenberg from exercises of the division.

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2. Comment. This was probably a test firing of tanks.

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REMARKS

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1. At 0900 on 19 March 1955, the units stationed in the Friedrich-Franz-Kaserne (2201) in Neuruppin were apparently alerted. Approximately 17 88-mm guns assembled in the barracks yard and left the installation at about 0930. They were followed by armored personnel carriers and 3 ambulances. Approximately 40 trucks occupied by soldiers and towing about 24 x 122-mm field howitzers came from the direction of Scholteplatz and proceeded northward. They were followed by some 30 tanks of a new type with a chassis similar to that of a T-34 tank and a turret which resembled that of a JS tank. The gun had no muzzle brake and a caliber of about 100 mm.

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2. On 19 March, units in the approximate strength of a division arrived from the direction of Rheinsberg and assembled in the Zechlin-Flecken-Linow-Rheinsberg-Schwahow-Frankendorf area. During the movement, all highways and roads were blocked by barriers which were guarded by sentries, so that only dirt roads and wood lanes could be used.

The assembled units were equipped with armored personnel carriers, armored scout cars, trucks and several tanks. The soldiers wore white badges on their caps. Almost all of them carried new rifles with new sharp bayonets, 2 cm wide. It was noted that the submachine guns were equipped exclusively with box magazines instead of drum magazines.

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3. On 20 March, it was determined that a control headquarters was located southwest of Linow. A number of telephone connections were observed there. After 1700 on 21 March, the units took position. In the following night, Mallitz, Zeuhlen and Bienenwalde were attacked by infantry with armored support. At about 1730 on 23 March, the troops advanced northwestward. The exercise apparently terminated in the morning of 24 March. A Soviet colonel referred to the exercise as "shifting maneuver" (Verschiebe Manoever). The driver's cabs of many trucks of the units involved mounted devices which consisted of 4 tubes, about 15 cm long and 4 cm in diameter, and were fitted on a tripod. Officers were repeatedly seen looking through the instruments.

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4. Between 24 and 26 March, new tanks fired at the Gentzrode post firing range. One shot was fired about every 30 minutes. A group of vehicles and officers with measuring instruments changed its position after every shot. An officer stated that the impacts of a T-421 were being measured.²

5. During the nights of 22/23 and 23/24 March, noises of trucks and track-laying vehicles were heard in Neu-Rooften from the direction of the Mens-Fuerstenberg road. [redacted] columns of trucks, half-truck vehicles with guns and tanks which came from the direction of Rheinsberg continually passed through Mens and proceeded toward Fuerstenberg during the night of 23/24 March. The columns allegedly involved elements which returned from firing practices in the Neuruppin area.

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1. [redacted] Comment. According to previous reports, the 12th Gds Tank Div conducted winter exercises in the eastern portion of the Wittstock training grounds and eastward between 19 and 22 March. [redacted] The present report confirms and supplements these observations. [redacted] the exercise was conducted particularly to train the command personnel. [redacted] paragraph 1 tend to indicate that a large number of tanks of the new type (T-54s?) participated. The units, which proceeded on the Mens-Fuerstenberg road, may have been elements of the 34th Gds Mts Rifle Regt and army troops of the Second Gds Meoz Army which returned to Fuerstenberg from exercises of the division.

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